



Unconscious Or Subconscious Beliefs

- ~ Good self-image is rooted in early learning. Go back to your earliest memories and find a time when you felt really good about yourself. How old were you? Did your good feelings result from someone’s reaction to something you did? How you looked? Who your family is? Did you have any control over the circumstances that resulted in your receiving approval? What did you learn from this event? Was this a one-time thing or part of a pattern you can now see?
- ~ Go back again to those very early memories and find a time with you felt really badly about yourself. What happened? Ask all the same questions that you did about feeling good. Did you have any control over these circumstances? Was this event part of a pattern you can see?
- ~ If the pattern of bad feelings about yourself seems larger or more intense than the good feelings, it is possible that your self-image today is being “undermined” by that pattern. There is some inner work you can do to shift the weight of those patterns and build your self-esteem. Self-confidence is a by-product of healthy self-love, and you can learn to nurture good feelings about yourself. The resource list provided will give you some ideas about things you can do.

Conscious Beliefs and Attitudes

- ~ Humans are not simple beings. No other individual can really know all of you. If someone does not like some behavior, opinion or aspect of your appearance, that does not mean that you are a bad or unworthy person. That “thing” is not “you”. You are much more than any one facet of your existence. Establish for yourself the philosophy that others may like or not like some part of your or your life, but that the total of your worth is not anyone else’s to judge.
- ~ Look for the good! If you seek the positive elements in your thinking, feeling and doing you will find much to like and admire. Do the same for other people and situations. Don’t ignore any dangerous or destructive elements you perceive, but try to focus on the better parts.
- ~ Make a conscious decision that you have a right to exist, to be happy, productive and safe. Do whatever you must to take care of yourself as well as you would someone “else” you love. It’s OK for you to be OK, and as Mark Twain said, “Your right to swing your fist ends at my nose!” People do what they do for their own reasons – you don’t have to take it personally.

Monitor and Adapt

- ~ If you have a success in changing your response to a situation, congratulate yourself. You do not need anyone else’s approval. Write yourself a letter of commendation, give yourself a gold star on your calendar, or reward yourself with a healthy pleasure. Keep a journal of events that you can see as part of a positive pattern that you would like to increase in your life.
- ~ When you have a negative experience, do not beat yourself up. Learn something. Look for the good in what happened and try to understand what the smallest difference in your behavior might have done to change the outcome. Rehearse a new behavior in your mind for next time.
- ~ Accept from the start that you will not do all this perfectly, or even very well to begin with. Positive thinking takes practice, and you may be changing the habits of a lifetime. Restructuring the foundations of your personality is hard work and not easy to do alone. Consider the possibility of finding a support group. Check the resource list for suggestions.